NEWS ANALYSIS 1-0416 MARCH 23, 1976
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AMERICAN INTEREST IN A SALT TREATY

ANNCR: AMERICAN POLICYMAKERS IN RECENT DAYS HAVE ONCE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT THEY REGARD THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE FOR WORLD STABILITY AND PEACE. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE: BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS OF AN ELECTION YEAR WILL NOT CAUSE THEM EITHER TO RUSH INTO AN UNFAVORABLE SALT TWO TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION OR TO SLOW DOWN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO ARRIVE AT A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE BOTH TO THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES. ALSO, THEY STILL HOPE THAT CONCERN WITH ADVENTURIST MOVES BY MOSCOW IN RECENT MONTHS WILL NOT AFFECT THESE VITAL NEGOTIATIONS.

THE REASON FOR THIS CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON THE SALT TALKS DESPITE A CERTAIN DETERIORATION IN U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONS WAS AGAIN EXPLAINED BY DOCTOR KISSINGER IN HIS RECENT REVIEW OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. THE SECRETARY STRESSED WHAT HE CALLED THE DUAL CHARACTER OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: TO PRESERVE STABILITY AND DETER ADVENTURISM, BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, TO KEEP OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK WASHINGTON IS COMMITTED TO WORKING OUT STABLE AGREEMENTS TO LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS ON BOTH SIDES. AS SECRETARY KISSINGER STATED, THE ISSUES THAT REMAIN IN COMPLETING A NEW SALT AGREEMENT ARE SOLUBLE AND AN AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS OF STRICT RECIPROCITY IS ATTAINABLE. WHAT IS NEEDED NOW,

HOWEVER, IS A MOVE BY MOSCOW TOWARD ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE, BY REACTING TO THE LATEST AMERICAN PROPOSALS.

THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WITH THE AIM OF AVOIDING A NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION. BUT PRESIDENT FORD ALSO IS COMMITTED TO A NATIONAL DEFENSE SECOND TO NONE. ONLY ON THE BASIS OF ADEQUATE STRENGTH AND THE MAINTENANCE OF STRATEGIC EQUIVALENCE DOES HE SEE A CHANCE FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENTS. (OPT) IN MAKING A ROUGH EQUIVALENCE OF STRATEGIC FORCES THE PRECONDITION FOR NEGOTIATIONS, THE FORD ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT SEEK EQUAL STRENGTH IN EVERY STRATEIGC WEAPONS SYSTEM, BUT IT IS DETERMINED TO ASSURE CONTINUED AMERICAN TECHNOLOGICAL SUPE-IORITY IN SOME AREAS TO COMPENSATE FOR SUPERIOR NUMERICAL STRENGTH BY THE SOVIETS IN OTHERS. (END OPT) WHILE NOT SEEKING AMERICAN STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO NOT PERMIT THE SOVIET UNION TO ACQUIRE SUCH SUPERIORITY. BESIDES, WASHINGTON REMAINS CONVINCED THAT ANY SUCH EFFORT IS ILLUSORY IN ANY CASE. IT WOULD CLEARLY LEAD TO COUNTER MEASURES BY THE OTHER SIDE AND ONLY LEAD TO A NEW BALANCE, BUT ON A HIGHER ARMAMENT LEVEL WITH HIGHER COSTS.

THE FIRST GOAL IN ALL SALT TALKS MUST BE TO ARRIVE AT AN EQUAL CEILING FOR STRATEGIC WEAPONS. BUT SIGHT SHOULD NOT BE LOST OF THE SUBSEQUENT NEED FOR ACTUAL REDUCTIONS IN VAST ARMAMENTS WITHOUT WHICH NEITHER SIDE CAN HOPE TO REORDER ITS PRIORITIES AND TO SPEND MORE FOR HUMAN NEEDS. THERE OFTEN HAS BEEN IMPATIENCE BY SOME URGING A SPEEDY SALT AGREEMENT WITH THE HEAVY EMPHASIS THAT IS PLACED ON ADEQUATE SAFEGUARD

MEASURES. (OPT) BUT WITHOUT ADEQUATE MEANS OF VERIFICATION NEITHER SUPERPOWER CAN ENTRUST ITS VERY SURVIVAL AS A NATION TO AGREEMENTS. (END OPT) THE INSISTENCE ON ADEQUATE VERIFICATION MAY PROLONG NEGOTIATIONS AND REQUIRE COMPLEX CONSIDERATIONS. BUT IT IS REGARDED AS ESSENTIAL FOR MUTUAL SECURITY.

PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER ARE NOT AT ALL CERTAIN AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT A SALT TWO AGREEMENT CAN BE CONCLUDED THIS YEAR. BUT THEY WANT TO LEAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THEIR DETERMINATION TO GO FORWARD IN THEIR EFFORTS TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR SUCH A TREATY.

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